



From the desk of Freehold Borough Councilman George Schnurr

2023 FREEHOLD MEMORIAL DAY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

There are 5 veteran organizations in the Freehold area:

- *Disabled American Veterans Chapter #74*
- *Marine Corps League Cpl. Philip A. Reynolds Detachment #203*
- *American Legion Post #54*
- *Jewish War Veterans Post #359*
- *Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #4374*

On a rotating basis, each year one of the organizations that I just mentioned is the lead veteran group for the Freehold Memorial Day Parade. That veteran organization determines the theme of the parade and is given the honor of determining who will be the parade Grand Marshal.

The lead veteran organization for this year's Memorial Day Parade is the *Disabled American Veterans Chapter #74*. The theme of this year's parade, as decided by the DAV, is "Honoring the Veterans of the Greatest Generation".

The Parade Grand Marshal of the 2023 Freehold Memorial Day Parade as selected by the DAV is Charles Sona.

Sona served as a member of the Sea Bees Battalion 110 during 1944 in the Pacific. He was part of a second wave landing in Papua New Guinea which had a high casualty rate. What was left of his platoon joined the 7th Australian Army Brigade where he participated in operations, mostly at night, in the foothills of the Owen Stanley Mountains. After returning from such an operation, he was injured and was shipped to several different hospitals in Australia and then home. He was honorably medically discharged at the end of October 1944.

As far as Memorial Day goes...Monday, May 29th, 2023 is Memorial Day. The morning begins with the traditional "Elks Point Service of Reflection". This ceremony begins at Elks Point (where Routes 79 and 537) converge at 8:30 a.m. The Service of Reflection is in memory of all Freehold and other American servicemen and servicewomen who lost their lives defending their nation. Each and every one of our veterans and the ones who made the ultimate sacrifice represented by the crosses and stars of David at Elk's Point, have honored us through their brave commitment to our country.

About the parade itself. This year's parade is the 149th Freehold Memorial Day Parade. The Freehold Memorial Day Parade is the state's longest running parade of its kind and Monmouth County's largest such parade. The Freehold Memorial Day Parade is as old as the Kentucky Derby. It is one of the signature events of our community. When the parade honoring our veterans started there were only 37 states in our nation, so that shows you how long this has been going on.

The parade will officially commence at 9:45 a.m. at Brinckerhoff Avenue and Main Street by a flag-draped casket accompanied by active military from various branches of service. This casket will be pulled down the parade route to remind us why we are all there. At 10:00 am, the veteran groups will begin to march down Main Street followed by the rest of the parade.

On behalf of Mayor Kevin Kane & my colleagues on the Freehold Borough Council & the Memorial Day Parade Committee, we would like to invite you to join us at the Service of Reflection and the Parade on Memorial Day.

Councilman George Schnurr